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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8826
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 000538

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/PGI DAVID TESSLER AND OES ED FENDLEY

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SENV](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: BELGIUM: ENCOURAGED BY USG CLIMATE CHANGE
POSITION, BUT SEEKS MORE DATA

Summary

¶1. (SBU) Econoffs met March 26 with Mr. Geert Fremout and Mr. Peter Winnoeck of the Belgian Ministry of Environment and Health, to discuss the Bonn talks on global warming. Econoff discussed many of the ten principles from Special Envoy on Climate Change (SECC) Todd Stern's March 3 speech at the U.S. Climate Action Symposium. Fremout, who is heading Belgium's delegation to Bonn, was largely positive about the positions the SECC made in his speech, but said he would like to see the numbers behind the SECC's assertion in his speech that the United States could cut its greenhouse gas emissions by less than 25-40 percent by 2020 and then catch up to 80 percent by taking a steeper path between 2020 and 2050. Both Fremout and Winnoeck felt that if the United States cut its emissions less leading up to 2020, other countries and regions (including the European Union) would also cut their emissions less. Fremout otherwise indicated that Belgium saw the Bonn meetings as being a useful stage of countries talking about their positions, and hoped there would be a focus on mitigation efforts.

¶2. (SBU) Fremout and Winnoeck also asked whether the U.S. reductions were domestic only or also involved foreign offsets via flexible mechanisms. They said they thought Belgium could reach 30 percent reduction by 2020, with 50 percent of the reduction coming from flexible mechanism foreign offsets, but added they were under pressure by Belgian industry to do less domestically. They asked whether the United States had estimates for costs imposed on industry to meet its 2020 emission reduction goals (at whatever level).

¶3. (SBU) On China, Fremout asked whether the USG had any response to China's recent suggestion that importing countries bear the carbon cost of the products imported, not the producing countries. Fremout said the European Union did not have an opinion so far, but noted that the Chinese suggestion runs counter to the long-standing understanding that a country was responsible for the emissions on its territory.

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